

time of the departure from Egypt. If the bones of the patriarchs lay therefore in the same room with Joseph's bones, what more natural than they should be carried with his bones and buried with his bones in the promised land. This supposition, which is natural and probable, explains the statement of Stephen and the traditions of the Jews, to the same effect as mentioned by the Rabbins and Jerome (Lightfoot.) It is not therefore the resting place of Joseph alone we see there at the foot of the Gerizim, but the resting place of the twelve patriarchs, of the men who dug this well, the men who followed their cattle over that rich plain, the men that sold at no great distance from this spot that brother whose ashes mingle with theirs in sweet repose till the last trumpet shall shake Ebal and Gerizim.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE TOP OF GERIZIM.

The valley between Ebal and Gerizim, across which came and went the blessings and the curses from the confronting tribes, is one of the most beautiful in Palestine. We rode through this valley, keeping close to the base of Gerizim and having the stream, to which we have already referred, on our right. Nestled among the trees rose before us the white walls and minarets of Nablous, a thriving town of several thousand inhabitants, interesting to travellers from the colony of Samaritans who, slowly dying out, cling with increasing tenacity—the oldest and smallest sect in the world—to their synagogue, to their religious rites and to their five books of Moses, said to be the oldest of MSS. Their spirit to-day is that breathed by the woman that talked with Jesus by the well down yonder. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." They

showed us with pride their synagogue, their ancient rolls and the Pentateuch which no one is allowed to touch. Right through the town we went to our tents on the other side, pitched under the western wall, in a beautiful spot near the water shed, where the springs disport to different seas, surrounded by such a variety of trees as to suggest the fitness of the spot as the scene of the parable of Jotham. "Jotham went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice and cried and said unto them, "Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them." Judges ix. 8. It is a remarkable fact that in the valley of Shechem the trees have kept their position during all these centuries as the most prominent objects in the landscape.

We get a hasty supper, and hurry to see the sun set from the top of Gerizim. We obtained for escort a young Samaritan, who talks a little English, picked up during a visit to England, and in acting as guide to English and American travellers. He was a very interesting and amusing lad, bent on pleasing travellers by his politeness, and fleecing them by his pieces of old Samaritan Pentateuchs, which he sold dear as being rare. He was the same fellow, so he told us, who went down into Jacob's well and fished up the remains of Mr. McCheyne's Bible, which, our readers may recollect, fell in 1839 into the well, as the Scotch Ministers, sent on a mission of enquiry to the Jews, sat by the well's mouth. It is certainly a fact that parts of this Bible were afterwards recovered (if memory is not at fault), by Dr. Stewart, of Leghorn, for I saw the fragments in the hands of a speaker on the platform of Canonmill's Hall, Edinburgh, and the veritable hero of the descent and recovery now